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OFFICE OF THE COUNTY AUDITOR INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: All Council Members
FROM: Lauren M. Smelkinson, County Auditor
DATE: April 29, 2014
SUBJECT: Addendum to Council Meeting Notes

Please find attached an addendum (Bill 20-14) to the Council Meeting Notes issued April 24, 2014.

This item will be discussed at the April 29, 2014 work session for the May 5, 2014 Council meeting.

Attachment

cc: notes distribution list

Bill 20-14**Council District(s) All**

Mrs. Bevins

Recreation and Parks – Background Checks

Presently, Baltimore County is one of the few jurisdictions in Maryland that does not require a background check of its Recreation and Parks volunteers, particularly those who interact with or have supervision over minor children. In particular, the closest jurisdictions to Baltimore County in terms of geography, which include Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Carroll County, Harford County, and Howard County, require background checks for recreation coaches and volunteers.

Bill 20-14 requires background checks for Recreation and Parks volunteers. In particular, the bill requires the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, in consultation with the Board of Recreation and Parks, to implement and adopt a background check policy and process by July 1, 2015. As part of this policy and process, the bill requires a criminal history records check and other reasonable inquiry into the background of any individual or volunteer with personal involvement, interaction, care, custody, or control of children, as a condition of the person's participation in any program or activity sponsored by the Department of Recreation and Parks or a certified Recreation Council. It also requires that the policy identify the specific criminal offenses for which a charge or conviction would disqualify a person from participating in youth programs or activities, and indicate whether the disqualification is permanent or for a specific period of time. Finally, the bill permits the Department of Recreation and Parks to adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of the background check policy and process.

The fiscal impact of this bill will be determinable once the Department of Recreation and Parks adopts a background check policy and process. The Department of Recreation and Parks advised that the number of volunteers, including coaches, assistant coaches, and anyone who would have direct contact with children, is estimated to total 30,000 per year. The cost of background checks varies and will depend on the selected level of service and provider. The Office of Human Resources advised that the current cost of background check services utilized

by County Government is \$34.50 per individual fingerprinted. If the same background check service is used, the cost for 30,000 volunteers would total \$1,035,000. The Department further advised that an estimated 4 fingerprinting machines (1 per regional office), costing \$14,000 per machine (\$56,000), would be needed, along with approximately \$10,000 for staff to perform the fingerprinting in the initial year. Additionally, the Department indicated that it would likely need 1 Management Analyst II (annual salary of approximately \$50,000) and 1 Account Clerk III (annual salary of approximately \$35,000) to administer these activities. Based on these estimates, the first-year cost would total an estimated \$1,186,600. Based on an estimated 230,000 registrants (and 30,000 volunteers), a \$5 fee per registrant and volunteer would cover first-year costs.

Bill 20-14 shall take effect 45 days after its passage by the County Council.